

Message

From: Post, Gloria [Gloria.Post@dep.nj.gov]
Sent: 6/8/2018 11:39:21 AM
To: Lau, Chris [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=dd4494e8927a4d78a5d2b9b20c618d4e-Lau, Chris]; Strynar, Mark [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=5a9910d5b38e471497bd875fd329a20a-Strynar, Mark]; Lindstrom, Andrew [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=04bf7cf26aa44ce29763fbc1c1b2338e-Lindstrom, Andrew]
Subject: NC News story, FYI

FYI, see highlighted below. I am glad that Andy and Mark got well-deserved praise!

<http://www.starnewsonline.com/news/20180607/surfrider-foundation-holds-genx-panel-on-storys-1-year-anniversary>

Surfrider Foundation holds GenX panel on story's 1-year anniversary

The Surfrider Foundation Cape Fear Chapter hosted a panel called "What's in Our Water?" to close the region's inaugural Clean Water Week. Vince Winkel of WHQR moderated the panel which included scientists, clean water advocates and government officials. [ADAM WAGNER/STARNEWS]

By Adam Wagner StarNews Staff

Thursday

Posted Jun 7, 2018 at 9:31 PM Updated Jun 7, 2018 at 9:31 PM

Share

DEQ said Thursday that they have standards for non-GenX PFAS chemicals in region's drinking water.

WILMINGTON – A year to the day after the Cape Fear region first learned of GenX, about 100 people gathered in the Union Station auditorium at Cape Fear Community College to review what has been done and what still needs to occur.

Panelists fielded a wide-ranging set of questions that touched on the science of perfluorinated compounds, the politics of environmental pollution and whether Wilmington's water is safe, among other topics. The event was hosted by the Cape Fear Chapter of Surfrider Foundation as part of the region's inaugural Clean Water Week.

A clear message during Thursday's event was that scientists and residents are concerned about perfluorinated chemicals beyond GenX. Other compounds shown in multiple studies to be observed at high levels included Nafion byproducts 1 and 2, as well as PFMOAA.

The Environmental Protection Authority's Athens lab, which is testing samples for DEQ, recently received standards for several non-GenX perfluorinated compounds, said Linda Culpepper, the interim director the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) Department of Water Resources. The lab is, Culpepper said, finishing validation of its test method and will check samples from several key dates from the past year.

“We had hoped to have those results back already,” said Culpepper, who pledged they would be posted on DEQ’s website as soon as they became available.

A study conducted by N.C. State University’s Center for Human Health and the Environment (CHHE) indicated Nafion byproduct 2 and PFMOAA were found in November at significantly higher levels than GenX. While the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services has set a health goal of 140 parts per trillion for GenX, there is no health information available for those additional chemicals.

“The concern should be about what we don’t know is in the water,” said Dana Sargent of Cape Fear River Watch.

Sargent referenced a recent WRAL report on the N.C. Manufacturers Alliance’s lobbying resulting in changes to the state budget bill’s emerging contaminant portion, specifically a portion providing for a mass spectrometer that can only test for already known chemicals, not identifying spikes of unknown chemicals.

Earlier in the meeting, Culpepper likened the mass spectrometer conversation to choosing between a Chevrolet, Cadillac and Tesla.

“What we were given,” Culpepper said, “was a moped.”

Others speaking included Susanne Brander, an Oregon State University toxicologist; Larry Cahoon, a UNC Wilmington biologist; Jamie DeWitt, an East Carolina University toxicologist; Jim Flechtner, the executive director of Cape Fear Public Utility Authority; and Jane Hoppin, the deputy director of CHHE.

Elected officials present at Thursday’s event included New Hanover County commissioners Jonathan Barfield and Rob Zapple, as well as Paul Lawler and Margaret Haynes, both members of the Wilmington City Council.

Candidates for office present included Marcia Morgan, a candidate for N.C. House District 19; Leslie Cohen, a candidate for N.C. House District 20; and Harper Peterson, a candidate for N.C. Senate District 9. All are Democrats.

In response to a question from Peterson, Flechtner said Wilmington’s water is safe “given what we know is out there.” The utility has made strides toward constructing a granular activated carbon system at its Sweeney Treatment Plant that will cost \$46 million to install and \$2.7 million annually to maintain.

“I think it’s a shame that people in this community have had their confidence shaken in their water supply,” Flechtner said. “I think it’s a terrible thing, so I think it’s incumbent on us as a utility to come up with solutions.”

North Carolina is fortunate, Cahoon said, to have EPA scientists Andy Lindstrom and Mark Strynar, who first identified GenX as the chemical coming from Chemours’ Fayetteville Works facility, as well as Detleff Knappe’s N.C. State lab that determined it was passing through water filtration systems.

Without those scientists, Cahoon warned, Chemours would still be releasing GenX in the Wilmington-area’s drinking water.

“We would be sitting here – or not here, actually – blissfully unaware that our water was contaminated,” Cahoon said, “because what we had that caused that to happen was a complete failure of the system that we have to make sure that doesn’t happen.”

Reporter Adam Wagner can be reached at 910-343-2389 or Adam.Wagner@GateHouseMedia.com.